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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003555

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2016  
TAGS: [IZ](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [MOPS](#)  
SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 17 MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE  
ON NATIONAL SECURITY (MCNS)

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel Speckhard for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY:

-- Casualty Figures: The GOI agrees to establish a single point of contact for casualty numbers.

-- The PM's Visit to Iran: The Prime Minister reported the he had raised Iranian support for anti-GOI groups during his recent visit to Tehran. Iran agreed to stop providing weapons to anti-GOI groups in Iraq.

-- Baghdad Security Plan (BSP): Additional checkpoints will be established by September 23. Charge reiterates the importance of the economic side of the BSP. A Salafist terrorist with possible plans to kidnap British citizens is captured.

-- The killer of a Russian diplomat is captured.

-- Diyala/Militias: Minister of Defense al-Mufraji argues that Coalition and ISF forces need to fill the security gap in Diyala before militias do.

-- A meeting will be held to discuss the weakness of the police. The possibility of Emergency Battalions composed of police from outside the area they serve in will be explored by deputies. END SUMMARY

Casualty Figures  
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12. (S/NF) Prodded by PM Maliki, MNFI Commanding General Casey asked for a discussion of differences in casualty figures between GOI sources. While participants blamed some of the discrepancies on press exaggeration (whether intentional or not), they agreed that the GOI's decentralized method of providing casualty data was also at fault. When some members -- including PM Maliki and Minister for State for National Security Shirwan al-Waeli -- argued that perhaps casualty figures should not be published at all, Charge argued forcefully that publication of the real numbers was the only way the GOI and the Coalition would be able to combat the inflated numbers appearing in the press. Maliki took the point, but noted that sometimes for operational reasons numbers might have to be withheld. MCNS members decided that the GOI should issue casualty data through a single authorized point of contact or spokesman, doing everything possible to guarantee that the information reported was vetted for accuracy. Furthermore, the GOI undertook to better coordinate their casualty data with the Coalition.

## The Prime Minister's Trip To Iran

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¶3. (S/NF) Maliki said that during his visit to Tehran he had complained about Iranian interference in Iraqi affairs and had asked for Iran's help in controlling the security situation in Iraq. He said that Iran had committed to stop providing weapons and money to anti-government groups in Iraq, to provide intelligence on the Al Qaeda threat, to help control the borders, and to put pressure on Syria to take similar actions. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister did point out that despite Iranian assurances otherwise, Tehran was still holding six Iraqis captured during an incident along the border. (NOTE: In a private discussion after the meeting, National Security Advisor Rubaie told General Casey and Charge that the Iraqi delegation had made clear its displeasure with Iranian interference, noting that Iranian weapons were being used to undermine Iran's own long-held dream of a Shia-dominated government in Iraq. END NOTE) Maliki said the two sides also discussed a variety of economic issues, including the importation of oil and electricity from Iran. Iraq declined an Iranian offer of a USD 1 billion loan at five and half percent interest, noting that Japan was offering a loan at much better terms (i.e. 10 years interest free).

## The Baghdad Security Plan Update

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¶4. (S/NF) Minister of Defense Abdul Qader Jasim said that Baghdad Security Plan operations continued, noting that at one location no less than one ton of explosives had been

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discovered. Jasim said an increased number of Baghdad checkpoints will be in place by September 23. When asked, Gen. Casey said MNF was still working to assist the GOI to get additional technical equipment for inspection at the checkpoints.

¶5. (S/NF) Charge reiterated the importance of the economic piece of the BSP, praising the recent creation of a Reconstruction Task Force that will work with U.S. experts to expedite the contracts for projects in cleared areas. He once again encouraged the GOI to send senior officials from essential service ministries to the cleared areas, promising to help provide protection for them. (NOTE: Following the meeting, the GOI spokesman told Charge that Grand Ayatollah Sistani was also urging ministries to send representatives out into the neighborhood. Charge suggested that Maliki should issue a directive on this issue. END NOTE)

¶6. (S/NF) Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) Director General al-Shawani reported that an extremist Salafist terrorist with connections to Al Qaeda in Iraq had been captured. Al-Shawani said the terrorist may have been trying to finance operations to kidnap British subjects in Iraq.

## Killer of Russian Diplomat Captured

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¶7. (S/NF) Minister of State for National Security al-Waeli reported that the killer of a Russian diplomat had been arrested on unrelated battery charges and was being held by the Iraqi 5th Division. Under interrogation he admitted to being a former intelligence officer with ties to the Syrian intelligence service and Ba'ath Party.

## The Militias and Diyala

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¶8. (S/NF) MinDef Jasim argued that the security gap in Diyala needed to be quickly filled by Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). He said that if the security gap

continued, militias might move in to try to fill it. Jasim said ISF and Coalition units should respond quickly to any attempts by the militias to move into the area.

#### Police Weakness and Emergency Battalions

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¶9. (S/NF) Commanding General Babakir Baderkhan Zibari said the police suffer from a lack of weapons and equipment, laying the blame at least partially on lack of support from the Ministry of Interior (MOI). MinDef Jasim blamed interference from the provincial councils under which the police operate, causing Maliki to suggest that a meeting be convened to discuss whether the police should be removed from provincial control. UK Ambassador Asquith said the MOI already has the legal authority to put forward the candidates for chiefs of police in provinces. The PM said that when Interior Minister Bolani returns from travel a meeting on the status of the police should be held with a view on improving CPA Order 71.

¶10. (S/NF) Al-Waeli argued that a major weakness of the police could be traced to the tribal links police officers had with people in their area of responsibility. He suggested creating Emergency Battalions for each province composed of officers from another province, drawing from the existing pool of police. General Casey suggested that deputies look at the pros and cons of this idea, as well as the likely costs. The Prime Minister said he would task the MOI with following up on this issue.

#### Facility Protection Service

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¶11. (S/NF) NSA Rubaie said another week was needed to review the recommendations that had previously been made regarding Facility Protection Service (FPS) personnel. Maliki said General Casey had agreed to look into a request for a camp where FPS personnel could be trained. (NOTE: In a later meeting with the Charge and General Dempsy, General Casey said the U.S. did not have spare facilities where this training could be conducted. END NOTE)  
SPECKHARD